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5. (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim 4, [characterized in that] wherein the composite material is of the type constituted by at least one layer of glass fibers and/or carbon fibers and/or aramid fibers impregnated with a thermoplastic or thermohardening resin.

6. (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the main outer shell [(2)] includes a plurality of wall portions, namely, an upper front wall portion [(6)] extended rearwardly by an upper rear wall portion [(7)], which is itself extended downwardly by a lower rear wall portion [(8)] limited downwardly by a lower edge [(12)], and in that said resilient bending means in said lower rear wall portion [(8)] includes at least one cutout [opening (13, 14a, 14b)].

7. (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim 6, [characterized in that] wherein the cutout [(13, 14a, 14b)] opens downwardly on the lower edge [(12)].

8. (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim 7, [characterized in that] wherein the lower rear wall portion [(8)] includes two lateral cutouts [(14'a, 14'b)].

9. (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim 8, [characterized in that] wherein the lower rear wall portion [(8)] includes three openings or cutouts [(13, 14a, 14b)] having the form of open slits on the lower edge, namely, one

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central cutout [(13)] and two lateral cutouts [(14a, 14b)] which thus form two deformable tongues [(15a, 15b)] and two deformable lateral wall pieces [(16a, 16b)].

10. ¹¹ (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim 9, [characterized in that] wherein the three cutouts [(13, 14a, 14b)] have the same length [(L)].

11. ¹² (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim ¹⁰ 9, [characterized in that] wherein the central cutout [(13)] has a different length than the lateral cutouts [(14'a, 14'b)].

12. ¹³ (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim ¹⁰ 10, [characterized in that] wherein the three cutouts [(13, 14a, 14b)] have the same width [(I)].

13. ¹⁴ (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim ¹⁰ 10, [characterized in that] wherein the central cutout [(13)] has a different width than the lateral cutouts [(14'a, 14'b)].

14. ¹⁷ (Amended) A protective helmet of the type including a main outer shell formed by a wall having a front facial opening, wherein the rear lower portion of the wall which corresponds to the zone occupied by the nape of the user, includes resilient bending means. [Protective helmet (1) according to claim 1, characterized in that] and wherein [it] said bending means includes at least one cutout and said helmet further

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15/ includes a nape cushion [(17)] partially held in the shell by [the] said at least one cutout[s] [(13, 14a, 14b)] of the wall.

15.18 (Amended) A protective [Protective] helmet [(1)] according to claim 14, 17 [characterized in that] wherein at least one projection [(20, 20a, 20b)] affixed to the nape cushion [(17)] is provided and is adapted to cooperate with at least one of the corresponding cutouts [(13, 14a, 14b)] to be held therein.

16/ Please add the following new claims:

16.15 A protective helmet according to claim 1, wherein said resilient bending means comprises at least one cutout in the rear lower portion to define at least two deformable portions, said at least one cutout extending to a position less than half the height of the helmet; and

a nape cushion removably attached to the helmet in the area of the at least one cutout.

17.16 A protective helmet according to claim 16, 15 wherein said nape cushion extends across the at least one cutout to cover and protect the rear lower portion.

18. A protective helmet of the type including a main outer shell formed by a wall having a front facial opening, wherein the rear lower portion of the wall, which corresponds to the zone occupied by the nape of the user, includes a resilient bending portion.

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18. ²⁰ A protective helmet according to claim ¹⁹ 18, wherein said resilient bending portion comprises at least one cutout in the rear lower portion to define at least two deformable portions, said at least one cutout extending to a position less than half the height of the helmet; and

a nape cushion removably attached to the helmet in the area of the at least one cutout.

20. ²¹ A protective helmet according to claim ²⁰ 18, wherein said nape cushion extends across the at least one cutout to cover and protect the rear lower portion.---

REMARKS

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1-15 will have been amended, claims 16-20 have been newly presented, and claims 1-20 are pending for reconsideration by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and allowance of all claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

Initially, the Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that dependent claims 14 and 15 contain allowable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants have placed claim 14 in independent form incorporating the necessary limitations to provide proper antecedent basis for the terms recited therein, and the Examiner is requested to indicated the allowance of claims 14 and 15 in the next official action.